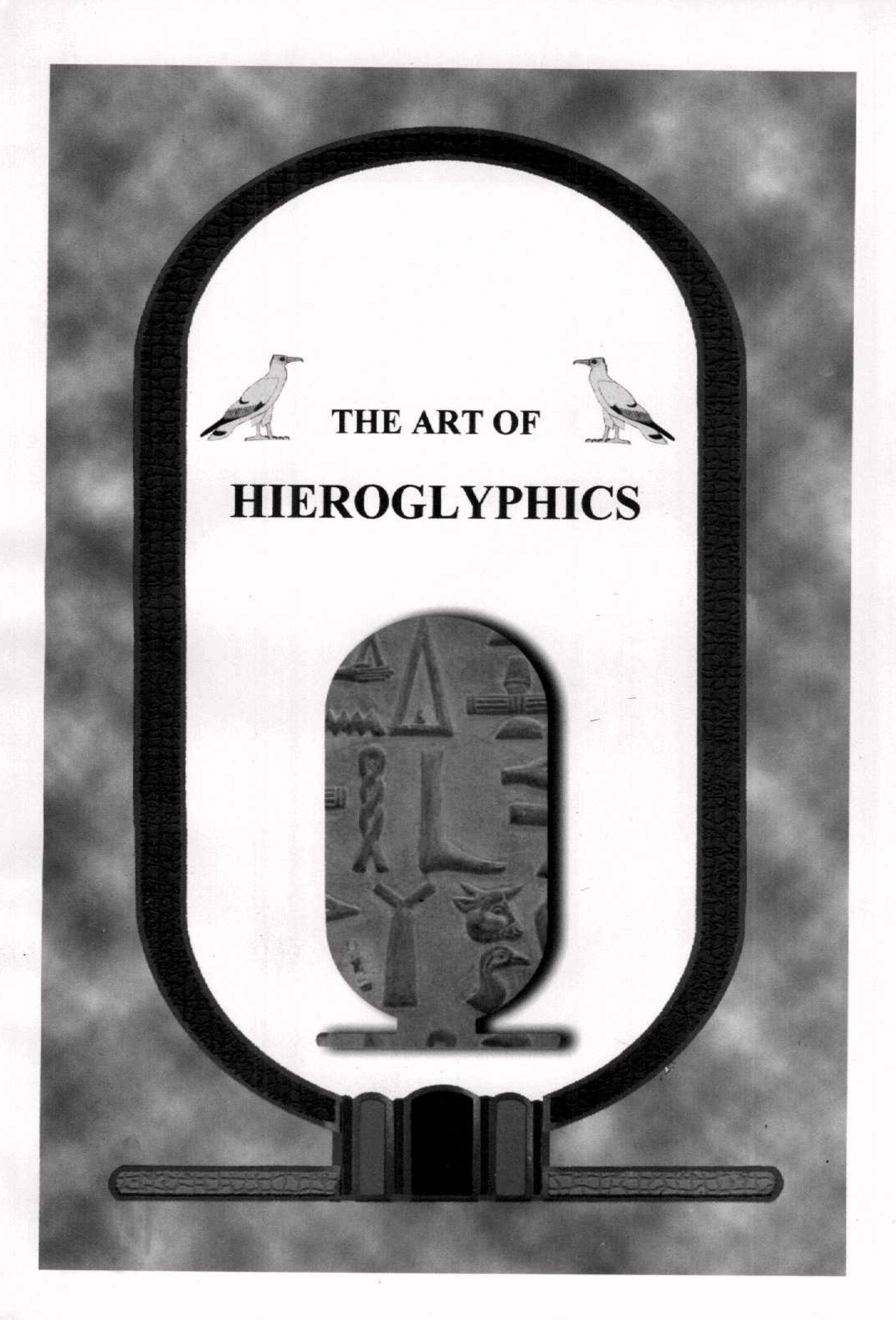
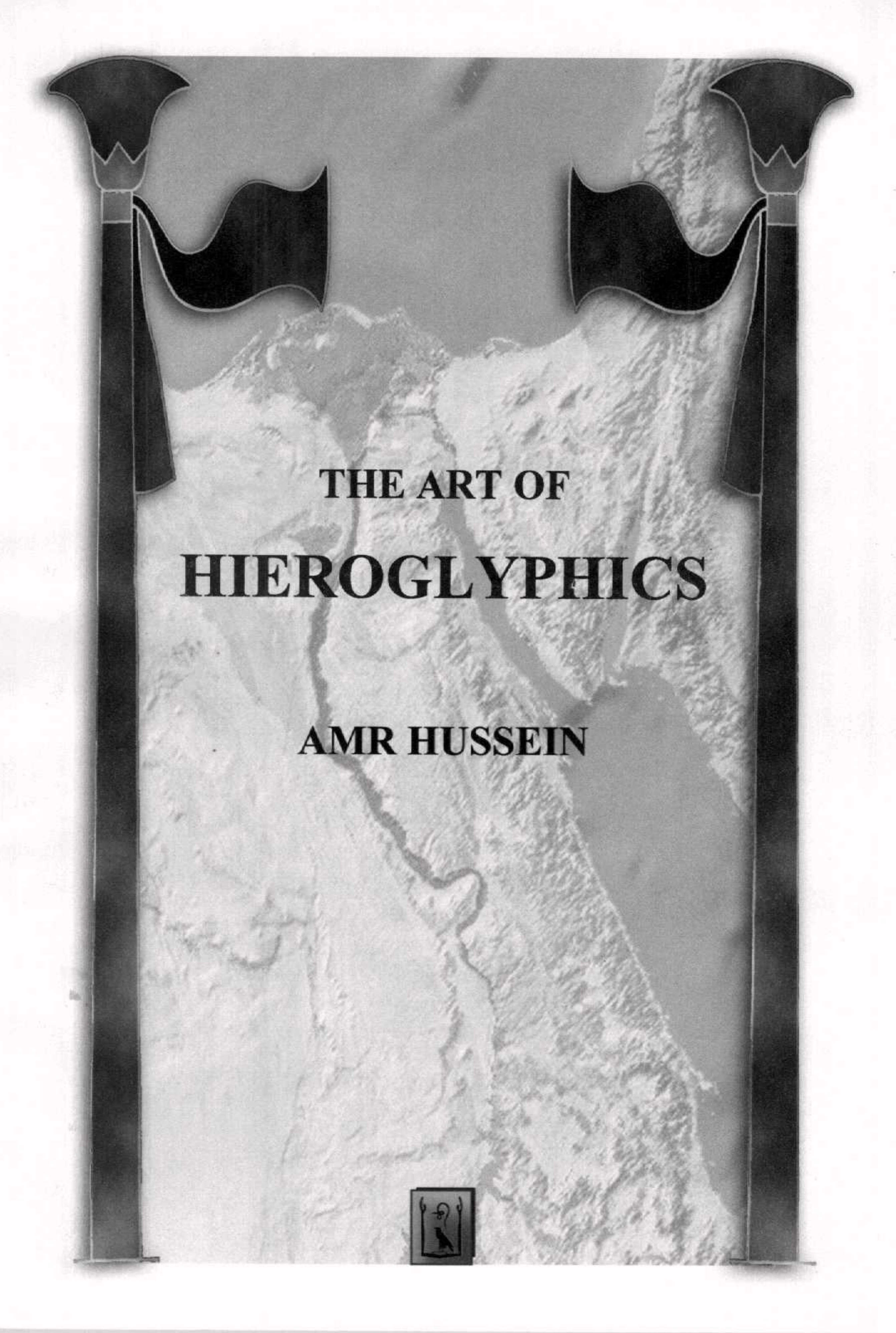

THE ART OF
HIEROGLYPHICS




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HIEROGLYPHICS
AMR HUSSEIN



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INTRODUCTION

In this book we will explain the main principles of hieroglyphic writing and to interest the reader in its letters and figures. It is also important to understand the ancient Egyptian thinking, who wrote this language. This language is like the others, but it has a special magic and unresisting shining.

The hieroglyphic writing signs consist of human figures, animals and birds and a lot of things from different departments.

The single voice signs or the ancient Egyptian alphabet consists of 24 letters; each one has a special voice.

There are biliteral signs consisting of two voice signs (letters) and triliteral signs consisting of three voice signs.

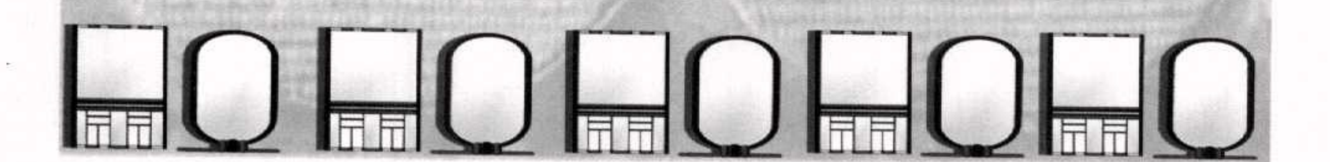
The hieroglyphic language contains determinatives, which help define the meaning of a word, and there are a lot of them.

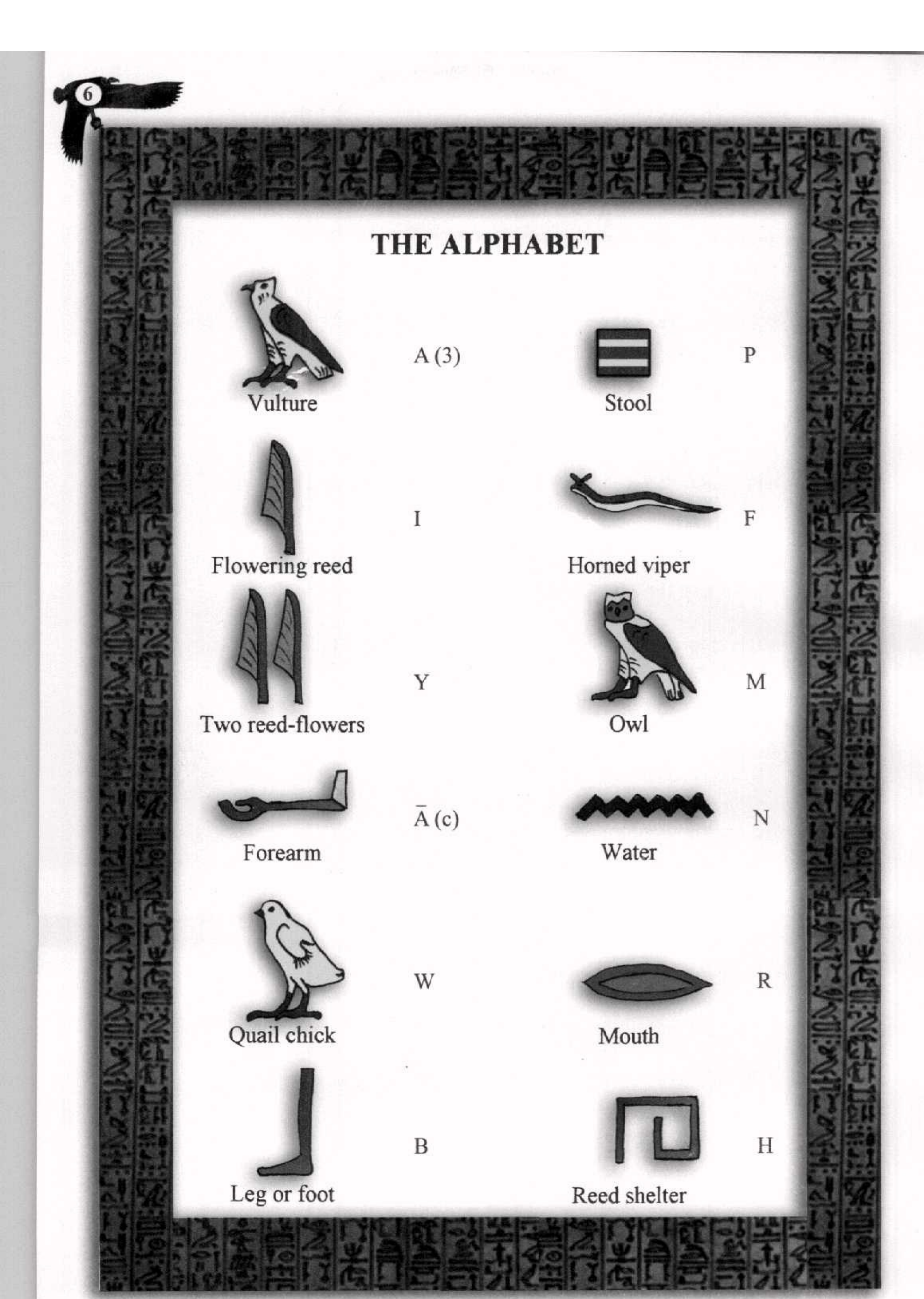
We have to know, that there are a lot of ideograms, showing the drawing and explaining it.

The hieroglyphics, which are inscribed over the walls of the temples and the tombs, are showing a great art because of their beauty. The artist or the writer must have had a lot of knowledge around him.

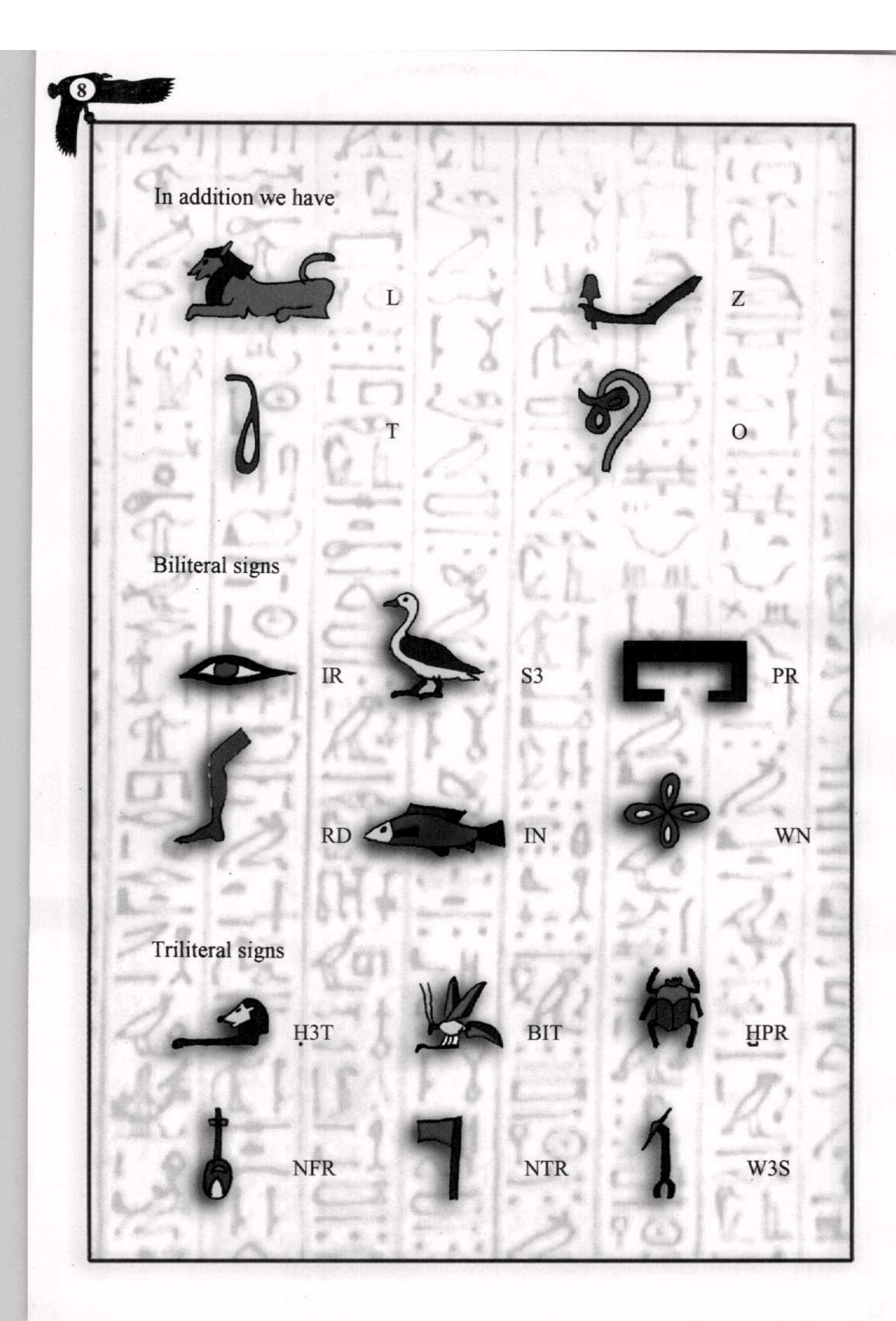
The ancient Egyptian was the first, who used the drawing with square net. This is a net of vertical and horizontal lines, allowing him to transform any drawing into a bigger size.

Finally we should mention that this language with its figures and drawings, shows the great skills of the ancient Egyptian, who wrote himself into eternity with this great language.




THE ALPHABET
Vulture
A (3)
Stool
P
Flowering reed
I
Horned viper
F
Two reed-flowers
Y
Owl
M
Forearm
Ā (c)
Water
N
Quail chick
W
Mouth
R
Leg or foot
B
Reed shelter
H


Ḥ
Wick of twisted flax
K
Basket with handle
KH (Ḫ)
Sieve
G
Stopper of jar
CH (H̱)
Animal belly
T
Half loaf of bread
S
Cord
TCH
(Ṯ)
Tethering rope
SH (Š)
Pool
D
Hand
Q (Ḳ)
Hill
DJ
(Ḏ)
Snake


In addition we have
L
Z
T
O
Biliteral signs
IR
S3
PR
RD
IN
WN
Triliteral signs
Ḥ3T
BIT
ḪPR
NFR
NTR
W3S

The ancient Egyptian used the profile shape in writing, but there are few examples of drawing the signs, which show the front face.

For example
Letter **M** (the owl) is shown by its front face.



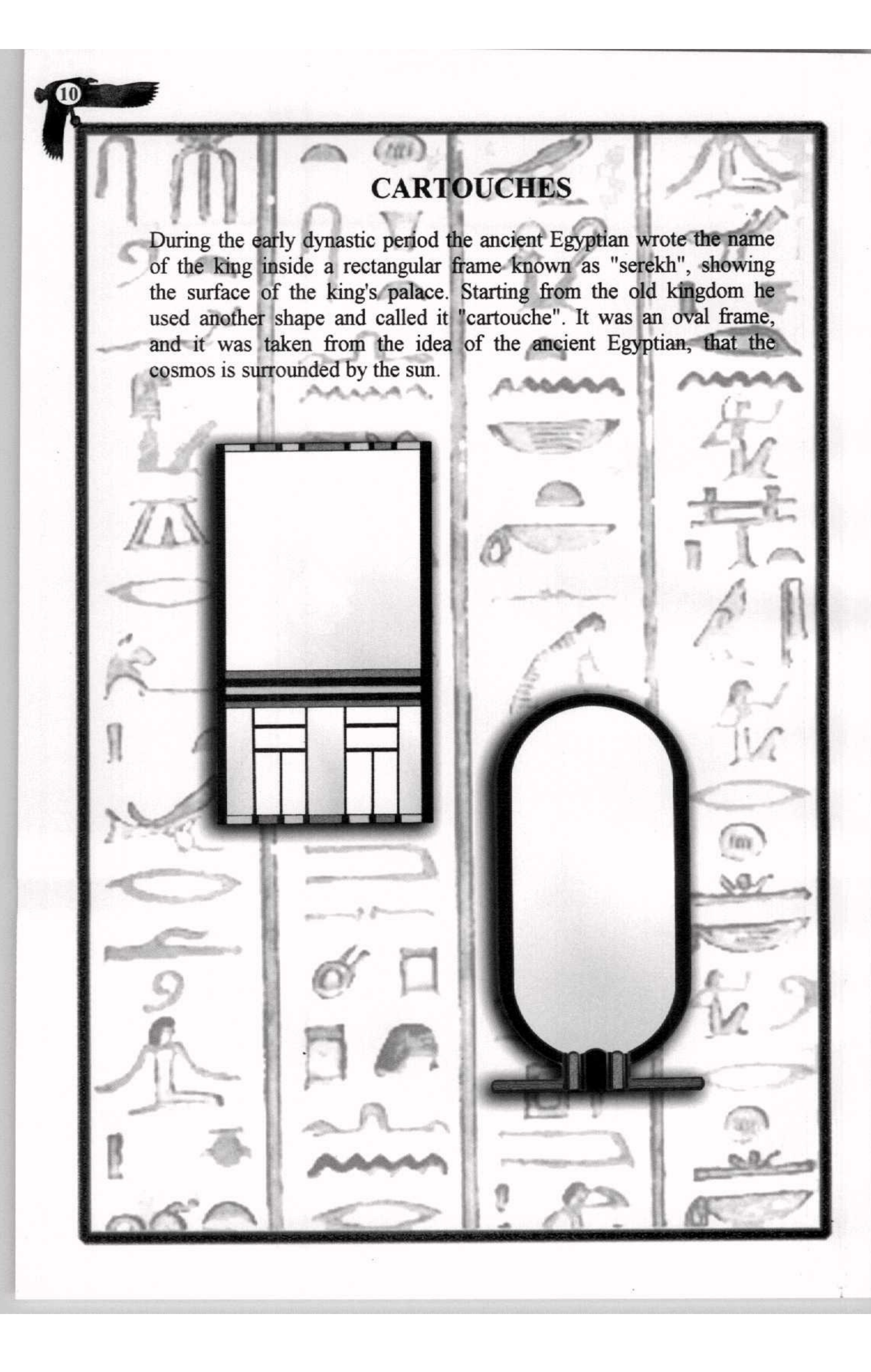
Another example
HR (the face of a man) is also drawn by the front, meaning: upon - for – at.

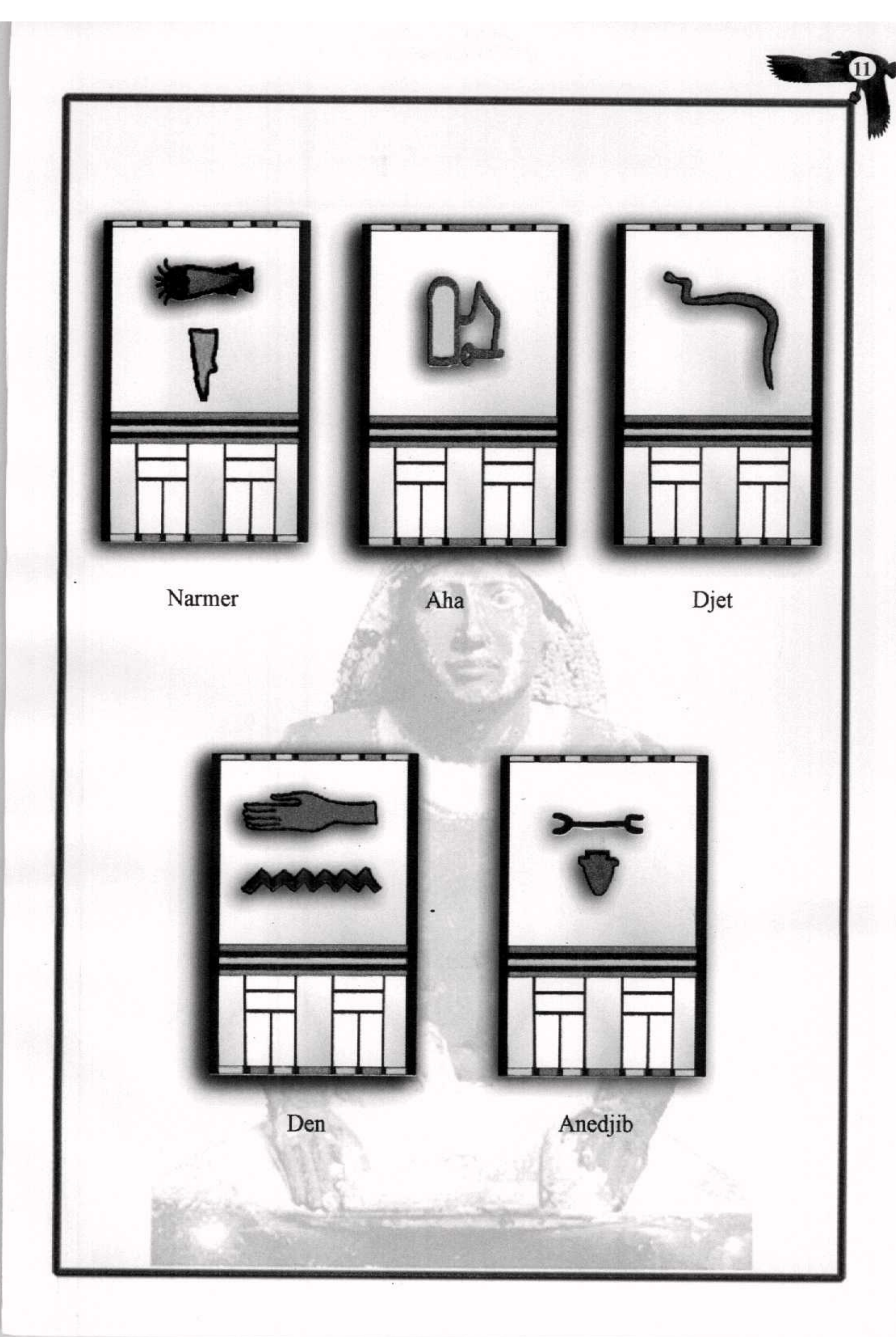


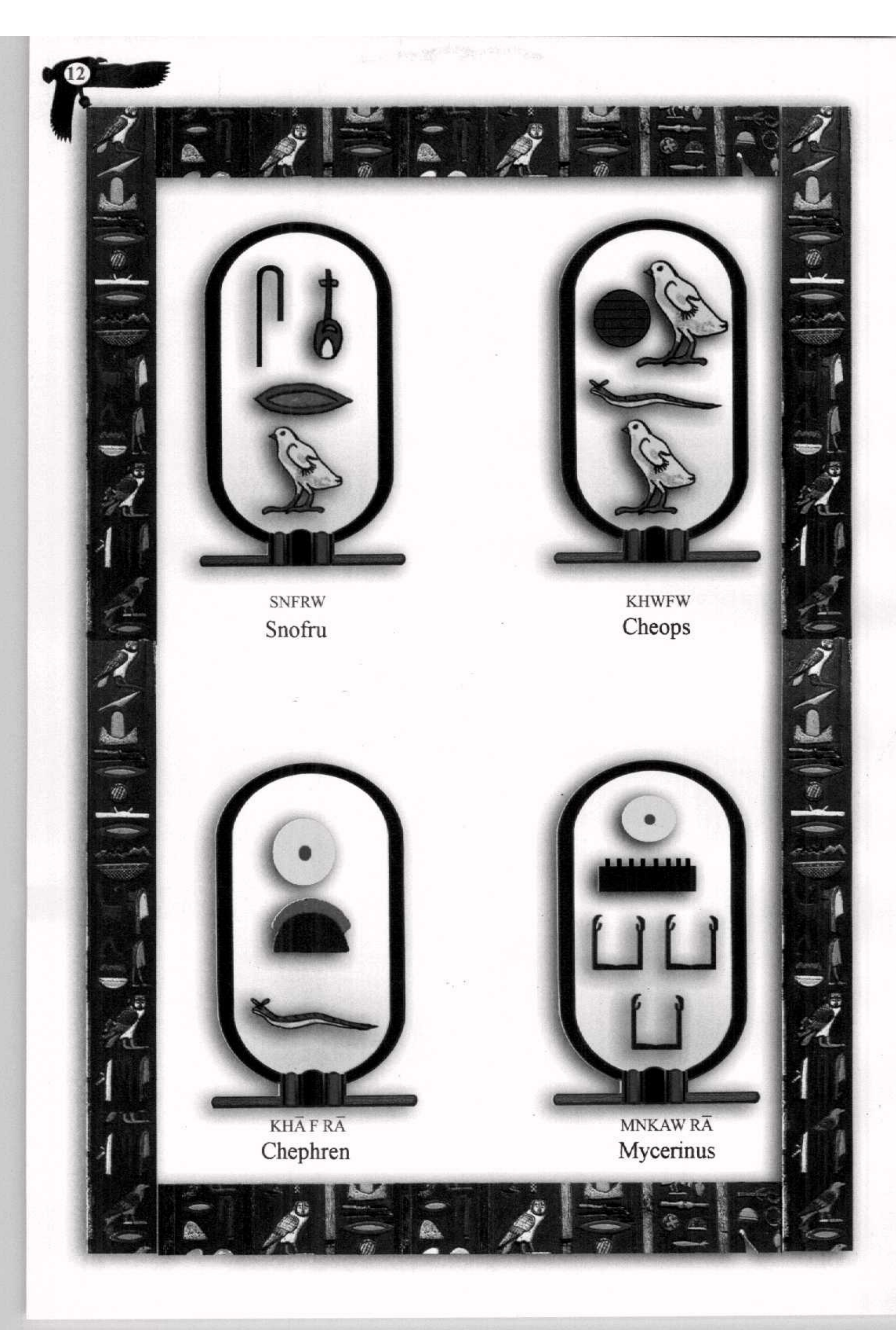
The ancient Egyptian used the drawing to express his language. This sensitive art shows the artists ability writing this great language.

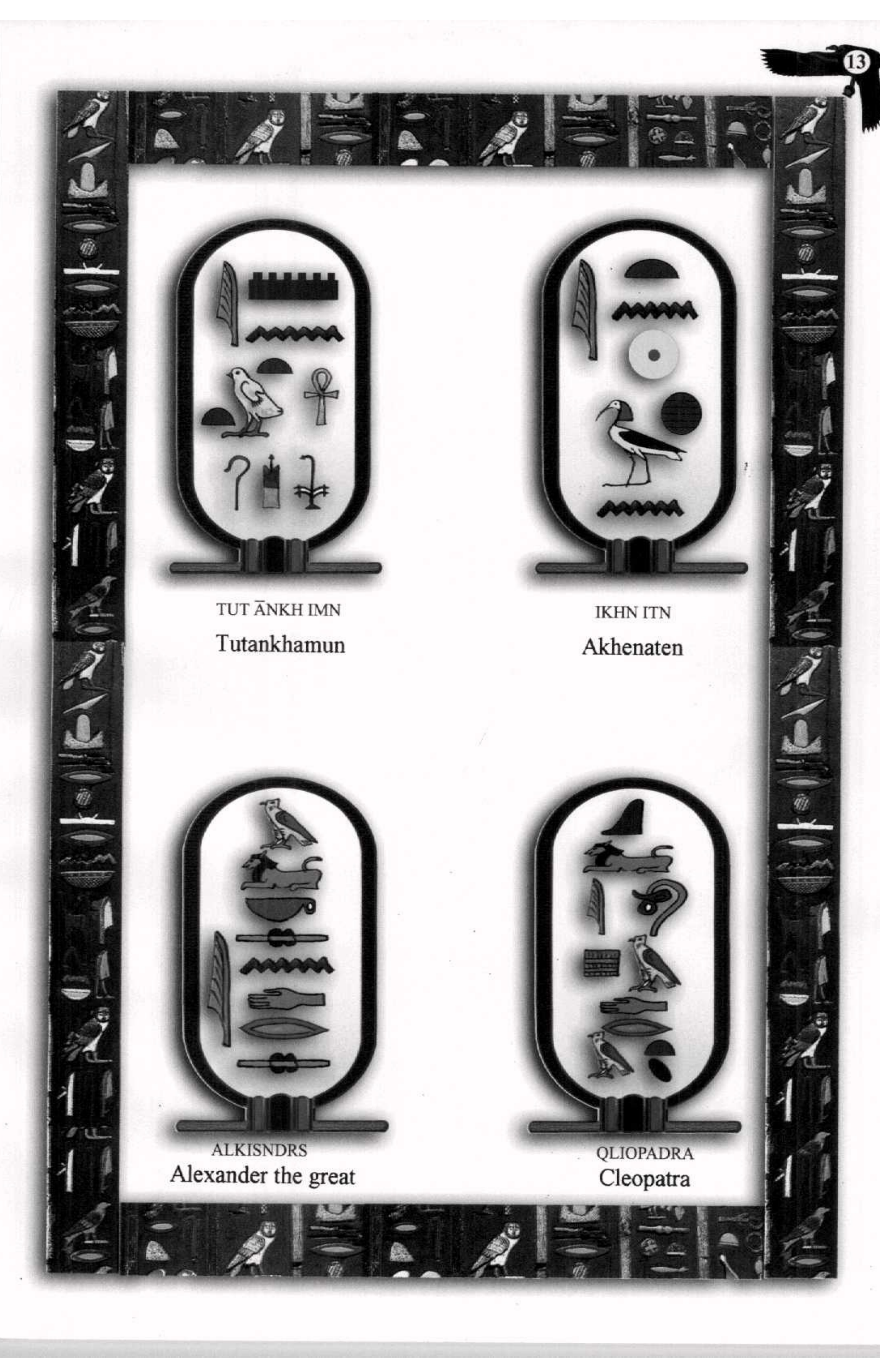
CARTOUCHES

During the early dynastic period the ancient Egyptian wrote the name of the king inside a rectangular frame known as "serekh", showing the surface of the king's palace. Starting from the old kingdom he used another shape and called it "cartouche". It was an oval frame, and it was taken from the idea of the ancient Egyptian, that the cosmos is surrounded by the sun.




Narmer
Aha
Djet
Den
Anedjib

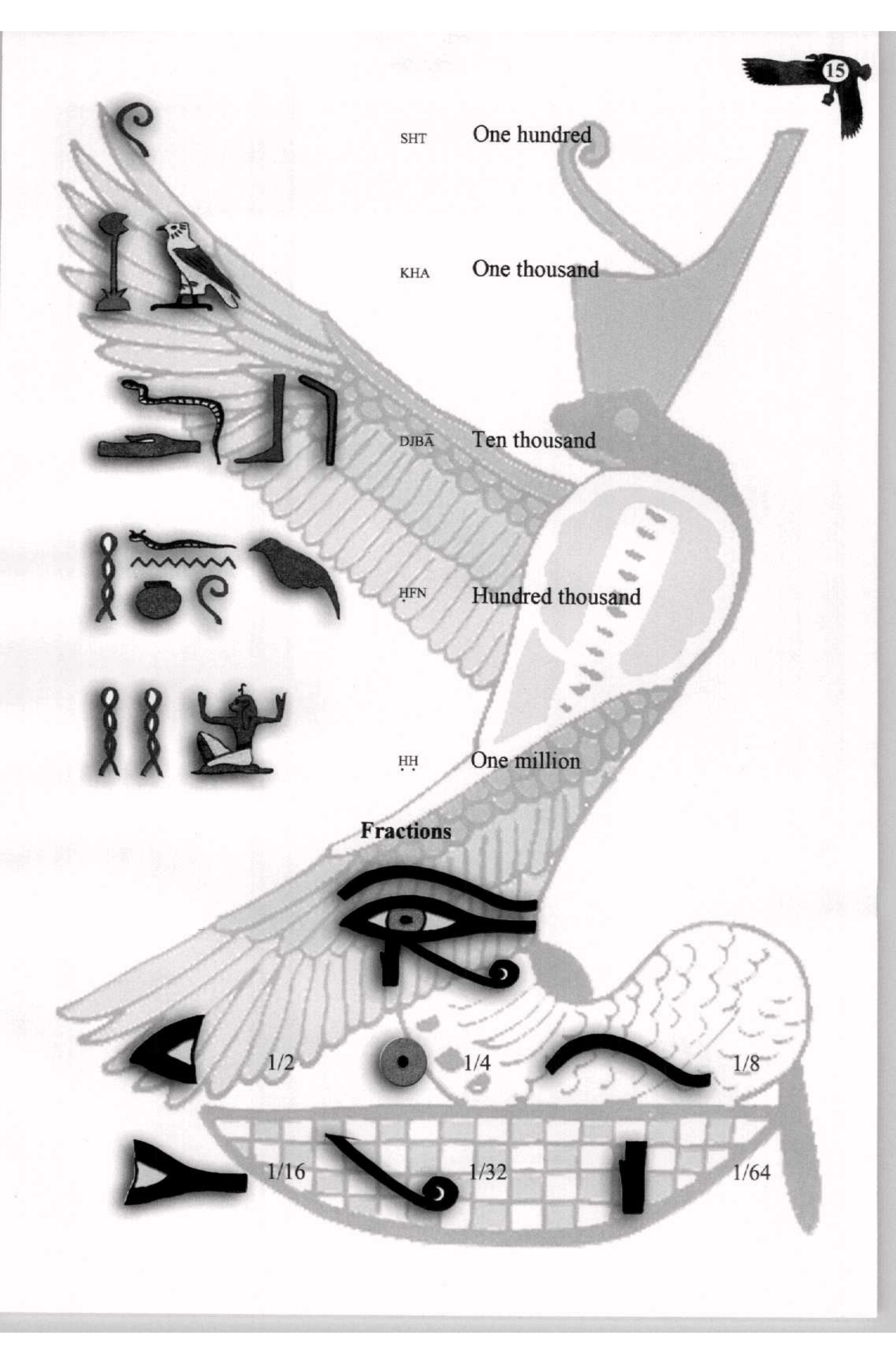

SNFRW
Snofru
KHWFW
Cheops
KHĀ F RĀ
Chephren
MNKAW RĀ
Mycerinus


TUT ĀNKH IMN
Tutankhamun
IKHN ITN
Akhenaten
ALKISNDRS
Alexander the great
QLIOPADRA
Cleopatra



NUMBERS

WĀ	One	MDJ	Ten
SNW	Two	DJĀTY	Twenty
KHMT	Three	MĀBA	Thirty
FDW	Four	ḤM	Forty
DIW	Five	DJYN	Fifty
SIS	Six	SR	Sixty
SFKH	Seven	SFKH	Seventy
KHMN	Eight	KHMN	Eighty
PSD	Nine	PSDYW	Ninety



SHT One hundred

KHA One thousand

DJBĀ Ten thousand

ḤFN Hundred thousand

ḤḤ One million

Fractions

1/2 1/4 1/8

1/16 1/32 1/64

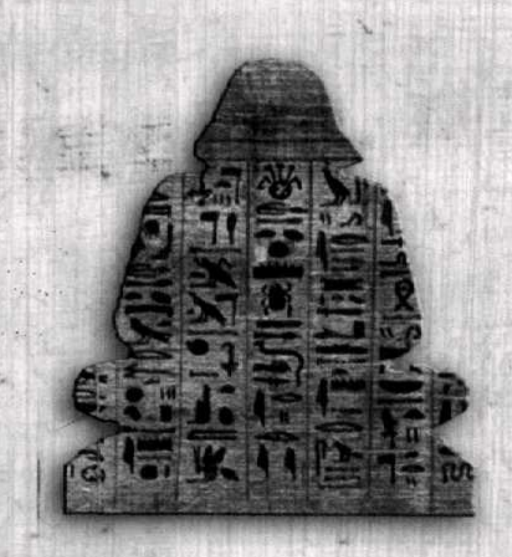


SOME EXAMPLES OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN WRITING













Some words

These words are few but they show the beauty side of the hieroglyphic letters, because writing the word is not depending on impacting the letters inside one word. The ancient Egyptian used a sensitive arrangement of letters in some words (for example: specially small letters he arranged upon each other).
Here are some words:

S — Man	MRI — Love	NB — Lord
ST — Woman	NFR — Beautiful	SA RĀ — Son of Ra
SHRI — Child	ĀNKH — Live	ḤMT — Wife
ḤM . F — His majesty	MR — Pyramid	IRT — Eye
NTR — God	DJT — Eternity	RD — Foot

THE ART AND THE WRITING

After starting this book with the Egyptian alphabet, with some examples of biliteral signs and triliteral signs, we will show the relation between the art and the writing. It is a fact, that the writing which the ancient Egyptian used, was a part of the ancient Egyptian art. The sign was very simple in its structure having the profile shape. The ancient Egyptian expressed his language with drawing signs. He worked freely, which showed the real Egyptian artist. Although the ancient Egyptian artist was free, he was sometimes depended on the writing art of another.

The beauty of the writing art appeared specially in the complementary alphabet signs. The bilateral signs or the trilateral signs explain the meaning of the word, which are called determinatives. The ancient Egyptian showed his ability in drawing details, specially in human shapes and the animals shapes.



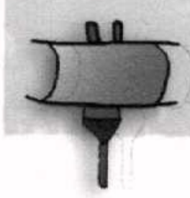
Seated man

It is one of the most famous ancient Egyptian signs. The ancient Egyptian drew the shape of the seated man with side view, with folding legs and stretched out the hands to the front. He used this sign a lot, as determinative. He also used this sign as pronoun.



Arms holding shield and battle-axe

It is one the writing sign, which the ancient Egyptian used as determinative. This sign expresses the fighting. The ancient Egyptian used three elements in drawing this sign: the arm, the shied and the axe. These are power elements.



Sail

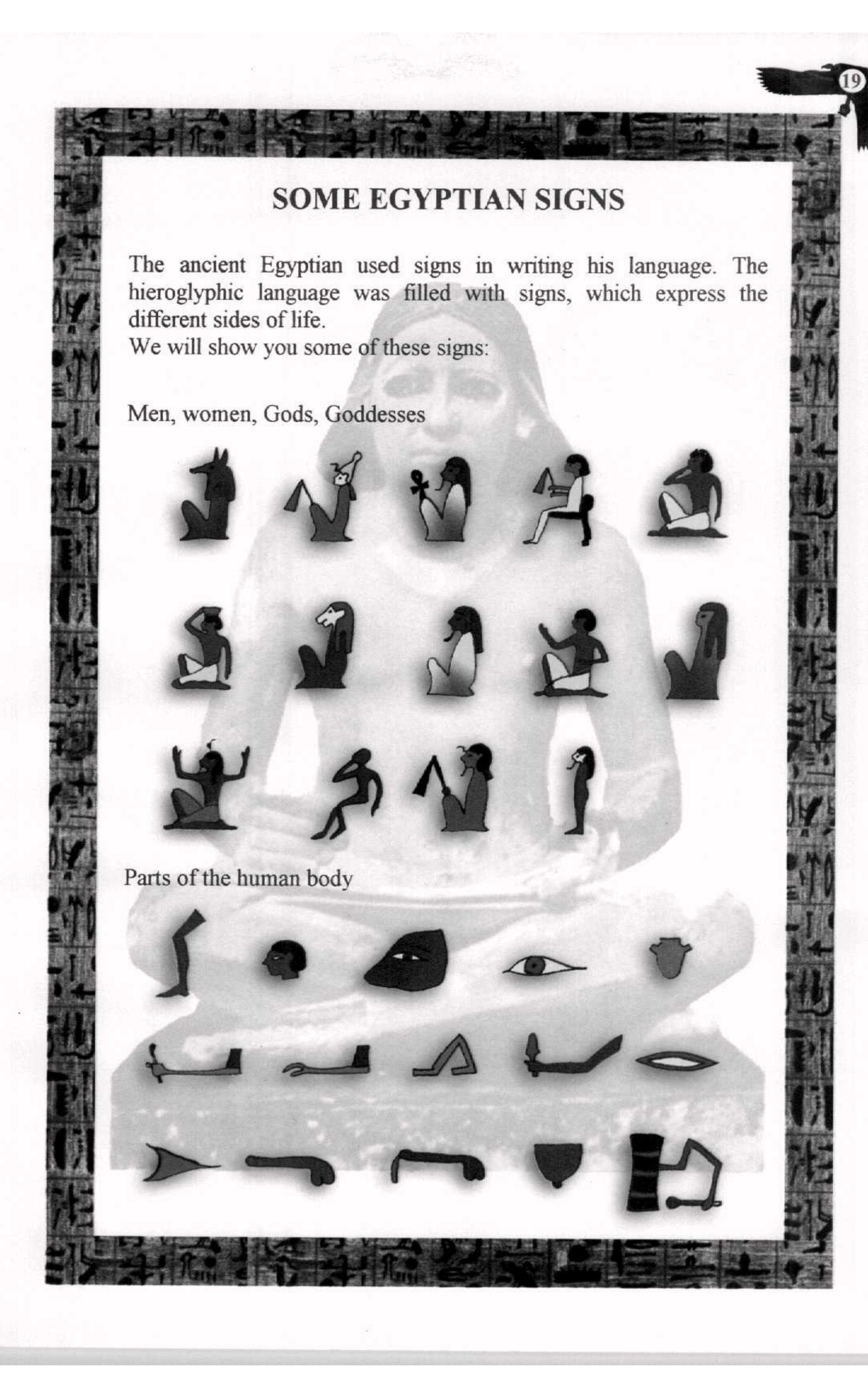
The sail sign expresses beside sail, wind and storm.

SOME EGYPTIAN SIGNS

The ancient Egyptian used signs in writing his language. The hieroglyphic language was filled with signs, which express the different sides of life.
We will show you some of these signs:

Men, women, Gods, Goddesses

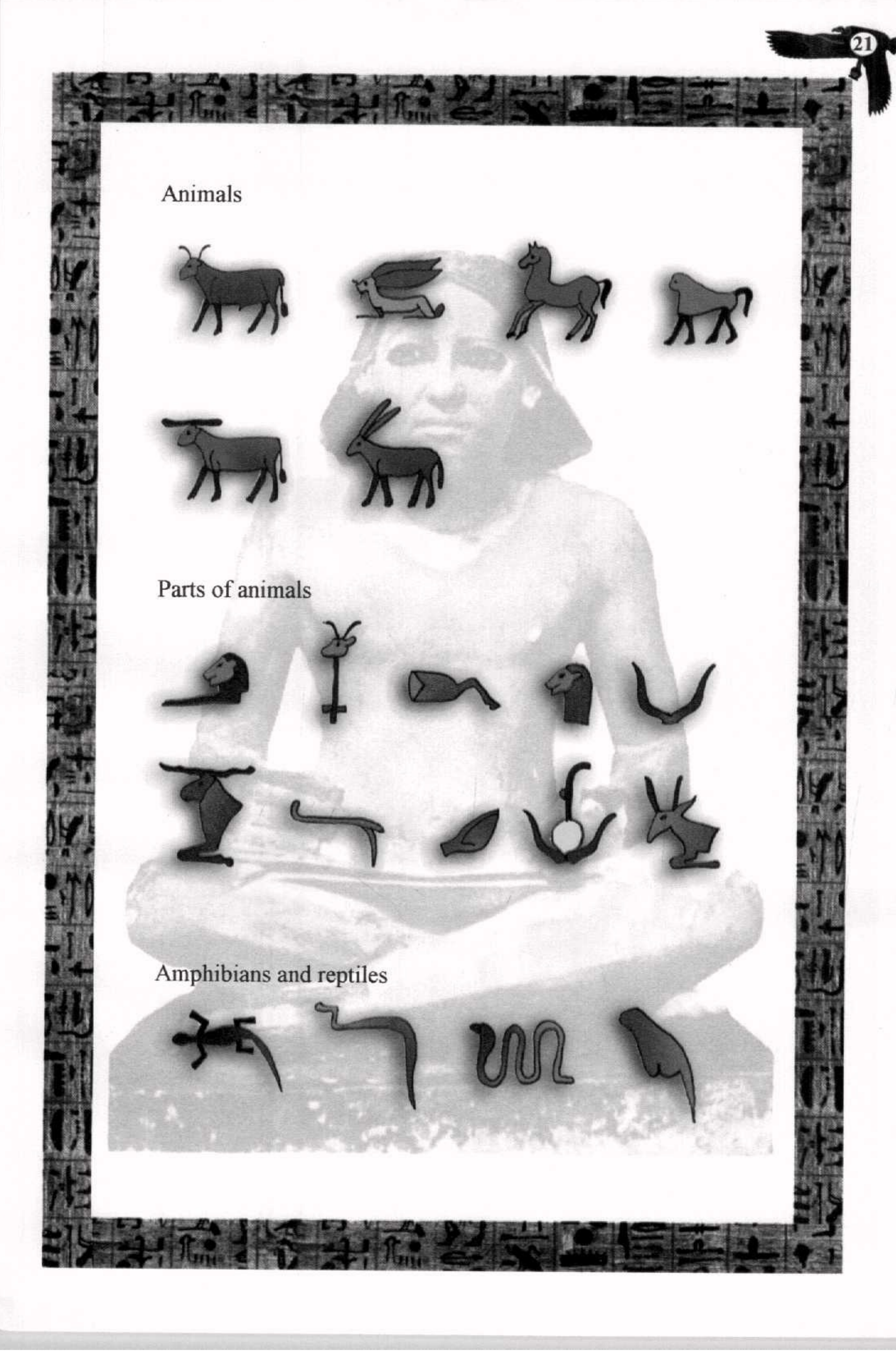
Parts of the human body



Birds

Parts of birds

Insects


Animals
Parts of animals
Amphibians and reptiles


Trees and plants
Tools

Crowns

Sky and earth

Ships and parts of ships

Buildings


Dresses and staves
Ropes and baskets
Vessels

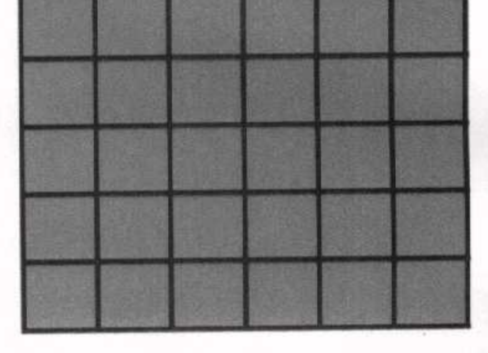


THE STAGES OF DRAWING WITH THE SQUARE METHOD

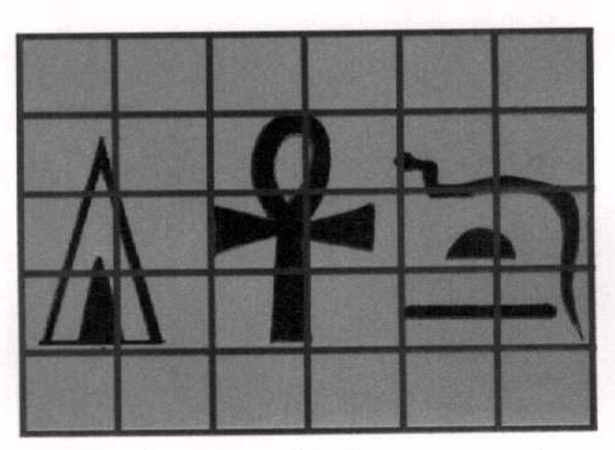
The square drawing method was one of several methods which the ancient Egyptian used to transform letters into a bigger size. This method depends on a net of equal squares. By using this method, any shape can be calculated and transformed into a bigger size.



The preparatory drawing



The square net



The drawing with the square net



Drawing after being zoomed in

The final drawing with different shapes



DETAILS OF WRITING

The ancient Egyptian used several kinds of writing; beside the hieroglyphic writing the ancient Egyptian used also the hieratic writing since the old kingdom, at the end of the seventh century .B.C, appeared another writing which is called demotic writing or the popular writing.

But the hieroglyphic writing had a special style in writing or engraving from the side. It is showing the details of the symbol, using one colour or several colours.

For example:

Coloured symbols　　Symbols with black colour



Symbol with black colour

Coloured symbol

Details of a symbol

WRITERS SIGN AND WRITER MATERIALS



The writing materials were consisting of a wooden piece (palette)," 20-43" cm long and "5–8"cm wide, having two holes for the colours. The writer also used a pen and brush. Several times the wooden piece had more than two holes and more than one colour was used.

The pen was made of the carrot plant after cutting it to pieces, with the length of about 20 cm. And then it was used as a colouring brush.



COLOURS

The ancient Egyptian excelled himself in writing specially over the tomb- walls, using coloured signs. So the coloured writing was a main part on the walls.
The ancient Egyptian mainly used the black colour, made from carbon. He used the white colour from white lime, the red colour from red clay, yellow from orpiment, and blue and green from turquoise powder.